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B-1B successfully retargets, releases JASSM in-flight

Article by 2nd Lt. Brooke Davis
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4/2/04 – EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. – The B-1B Lancer combined test force here successfully released a Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile at the Utah Test and Training Range, or UTTR, March 26.

March 26's release was the final phase of developmental testing to integrate JASSM with the B-1B; operational testing will start in April, said Maj. Wim Libby, 419th Flight Test Squadron B-1B test pilot.

"This release was not only a first for the B-1, but also a first for the JASSM," said Major Libby. "The B-1 is the only platform capable of re-planning the route of the JASSM in-flight and sending it to another target."

During the release at UTTR, located near Hill Air Force Base, Utah, the B-1B team used the in-flight, re-planning option to give the weapon a new route and target, said Major Libby. This was the first time the JASSM was released at UTTR.

"Initial indications are that the weapon performed flawlessly," said Major Libby. "Ideally, you'd want to program the target coordinates on the ground, but in reality, targets change while you're already flying a mission. We were able to re-program the JASSM in-flight to fly a big circle around the UTTR before hitting the target. Other aircraft are not able to re-program the missile during a mission."

The missile flew close to 200 miles before hitting the target, while the crew faced some weather and icing issues in the area, added Major Libby.

March 26's testing was a phase of a conventional weapons test program called JJI - Joint Standoff Weapon Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile Integration - designed to upgrade the B-1B's arsenal of weapons. Testers are continuously upgrading the bomber as a part of the 10-year conventional Munitions Upgrade Program testing, or CMUP, said Maj. Hans Miller, 419th FLTS B-1B and F-16 pilot.

Upgrading the B-1B to carry weapons like the JASSM takes software modifications, allowing the B-1B to have greater flexibility to re-target the weapons, said Major Miller.

"The successful integration of JASSM and JSOW shattered B-1 operational limitations," said Major



An Edwards B-1B releases the first-ever guided Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile Separation Test Vehicle at China Lake Naval Air Warfare Center Oct. 30, 2003. The B-1B Combined Test Force followed October's release March 26 by dropping an actual JASSM. (Photo by Steve Zapka)

[\(high-resolution image\)](#)

Miller. "With its capability to employ mixed loads, the B-1 is able to re-target a few JASSMs against long-range threats of about 200 miles away, drop a few JSOWs from about 40 miles away and drop multiple Joint Direct Attack Munitions on close-range targets in a single sortie."

The JASSM and JSOW are both stand-off weapons in the same weight class - they deploy wings after release and fly a preplanned route to the target. The JSOW is a glide weapon with an approximate 60-mile range at high altitudes, while the JASSM has its own propulsion system providing a range in excess of 200 miles, said Major Miller.

"Other objectives for the JJI program include regression testing to ensure that the software changes don't affect previous operational capabilities, evaluation of the military utility of enhancements and assessment of the readiness of operational test and evaluation," said Major Miller.

After March 26's release, there are only a few more flight tests needed to complete the JJI test program, said Major Libby.

The JJI test program will conclude its testing with live weapon releases. Then, the new weapons capabilities will transition to operational testing at Dyess AFB, Texas. The targeted field date of the JSOW and JASSM is scheduled for this summer.

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